TITLE: Rural and Small Church Ministry
TERM: Fall 2020-2021

PROFESSOR: Gilson Waldkoenig
CREDIT HOURS: 3

REGISTRATION: LIMITED TO: UNLIMITED
# AUDITORS NO AUDITORS

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Seventy-one per cent (71%) of all congregations in the United States have fewer than 100 people in average weekly attendance (78% in PCUSA). Forty-four per cent (44%) of all congregations are in rural or small town settings (48% in PCUSA). Explore your reaction to social change, conflict, community patterns, and opportunities for mission in rural places and small churches, including Appalachia and other regions. While readings, presentations and discussions frame the course, there are options for ethnographic field research and development of mission plans in a setting you choose.

CLASS OBJECTIVES:
1. Identify social patterns that inform faith, ministry and mission in rural places, including especially social change and conflict
2. Read places ethnographically—by culture, context, process and resources—becoming attentive to local and broader traditions of belief and practice
3. Recognize and analyze rural poverty, land dispossession and power disparities through rural history and rural sociology
4. Enhance one’s awareness of call shaped by place in both patterned and surprising ways, assess one’s development in ministry competencies, and envision mission in relationship to social and ecological context

PREREQUISITES: None

READING ASSIGNMENTS/BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Books:
- Margaret Craven, I Heard the Owl Call My Name (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Ltd, 2005), ISBN: 978-1550413397, $12.95
- Jeanne Hoeft, et al, Practicing Care in Rural Congregations & Communities (Fortress, 2013), ISBN: 978-0800699543, $16.07

Articles/Chapters
- “Studying Congregations” website https://studyingcongregations.org
- Wendell Berry, “The Work of Local Culture” from What Are People For? (North Point, 1990)
- “American Religion Data Archive” www.thearda.com

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:
Field Observations – 60% (Details to be outlined in syllabus)
participation – 8%
quizzes on readings – 2% each x 8 = 16%
Take-homes (open book) -- 2% each x 8 = 16%

ATTENDANCE: Required